## REMARKS

Please enter the above amendments prior to consideration of the merits of the present application.

A copy of the amended portion of the specification with changes marked therein is attached and entitled "Version with Markings to Show Changes Made."

Respectfully submitted,

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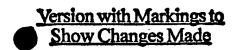
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This application is a continuation-in-part under 35 U.S.C. section, technical field 120 of U.S. application Serial No. 09/453,528 filed December 3, 1999 which is incorporated herein in the opening.

The present invention relates to a content distribution system for realizing a content distribution service including a distribution server for fee-paying distribution of digital contents, and a reference server.

BACKGROUND ART

Content distribution services used for fee-paying distribution of digital contents are one of a number of network businesses at present receiving a great deal of An example of such a attention from the music industry. service is Electronic Music Distribution (EMD). A large number of corporations and individuals are participating in EMD, with the aim of taking advantage of the new business opportunities that it offers. A conventional distribution system that realizes EMD includes a user terminal, a distribution server, and a billing server. Such a system distributes music contents for a fee, the music contents having been encoded using an audio compression codec such as MP3 (Moving Picture Experts Group 1 Audio Layer 3), Dolby AC-3 (Digital Audio Compression) or AAC (Advanced Audio Coding).

A user accesses a Web site by inputting an URL (Uniform